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ABSTRACT

A semiological study examined the products and processes of sexual identity/identification by "reading" newspaper sports photographs from three distinct but interrelated ideological positions (the dominant heterosexual culture, a residual reading which resists the dominant interpretation and asserts equality, and an emergent reading that argues for radical change). Readings based on each of these positions were developed for seven photographs from the "Sacramento Bee" and the "San Francisco Chronicle." Results indicated that: (1) within the sign system of the newspaper sports page, male athletes were represented displaying many behaviors that were constructed as female/feminine as well as male/masculine; and (2) the few action shots of women included linguistic signifiers to hold the dominant reading in place. Findings suggest that the stereotypes of appropriate and desirable behavior based on the sex of the individual were violated continuously in sports photographs of male athletes. Also, despite the influx of women into professional, college, and high school athletics, media coverage is still minimal and most photographs of women on sports pages are not of female athletes but of relatives of male athletes. (The seven photographs analyzed are included.) (RS)

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# SEXUAL IDENTITY/IDENTIFICATION IN COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES: A SEMIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF SPORTS

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## Introduction

In the last fifteen years there has been extensive research of sex difference by communication scholars. During the same fifteen years, criticism of the foundations of sex difference research also surfaced. Critics write that the foundations are muddled and do not produce convincing research efforts. (Lott, 1981; Putnam, 1982) Recently, critics have suggested that one way to reduce the confusion over the foundations of sex difference research is by examining alternative theoretical grounding and, in particular, by integrating feminist theory. (Rakow, 1986a; Treichler and Wartella, 1986; Dervin, 1987; Steeves, 1987, Cirksena, 1987) For these authors the primary cause of the muddle in sex difference research comes from the central assumption that there is an essential difference between two distinct genders/sexes that causes communication behaviors. (Johnson and Leck, 1975; Putnam, 1980; Isenhart, 1980; Lott, 1981; Foss and Foss, 1983) Integration of feminist theory demands that the principle of an essential gendered individual be investigated and not assumed.

Communication studies critics of sex difference research recommend studying sexual identity/identification as the consequence rather than the cause of communication. (Putnam, 1982; Foss and Foss, 1983; Rakow, 1986b) They further suggest that sexual identity/identification be operationalized as a verb or an activity rather than as "traits in a vacuous context" (Putnam, 1982 p. 2) in order to understand how, why, and where it comes into existence. All of the authors encourage the use of new approaches to the analysis of sexual identity/identification in order to avoid the trap of the binary categories of biological and psychological sex. By investigating sexual

identity/identification as work done in communicating and not as a psychological/biological identity inherent in individual subjects, it is possible to call into question the usefulness of the pregiven categories of female/femininity and male/masculinity. These critics also suggest expanded use of feminist theory because feminist theory explicitly discusses what it means to identify ourselves or others specifically by biological and psychological sex labels. If sexual identity/identification is not simply or literally a vital statistic, a matter of public record, then the implication is that sexual identity is not static but mutable, movable. What then is "female" or "male" if not a permanent, inborn identity?

The feminist theory offered by those in communication studies who are critical of traditional approaches demands attention to sexual identity as a process involving individuals and culture. (Treichler and Wartella 1986; Gregg, 1987) As described by Treichler and Wartella (1986 p. 12) this feminist perspective begins by recognizing the "subjectivity of all research" and the necessity of identifying the relationship between a culture's dominant ideology of sexuality and the actual conditions in which individuals live. It is this dynamic of cultural ideology regarding sexuality and lived experience that form sexual identity/identification.

Using Stewart and Philipsen's (1984) construction of communication as situated accomplishment, it becomes clear that communication is more than the transmission of information. It is both a product or message, and a producer of information. As situated accomplishment, communication is "contextualized by and constitutive of society." (p. 178) Communication is determined by the context and it determines the context. Influenced and influencing, communication is a social practice that reveals the ingrained values, norms, and beliefs of a culture. "Communicative meanings are deeply contexted in historical and

cultural situations, and situated communication is not only reproductive but also productive of common meanings." (p. 179) Stewart and Philipsen draw on the work of Calvin Schrag, who defines a construct called communicative praxis as the "holistic space in which our ongoing thought and action, language and speech interplay." (1986 p. 6) He describes speech acts as "fibers embedded in the texture of social practices." (p. 45) So, when an individual is communicating, she or he is engaging in a social practice that goes beyond the specific verbal message intended for another. Everything about the communication situation constitutes a network of interacting meanings. At work are humans and their verbal and nonverbal messages, their individual histories, the specific and historical contexts, and the history of the relationship between the individuals. As the network of interacting signs work together, meaning emerges. Combining cultural ideology regarding sexual identity, lived experience, and communication as situated accomplishment provides a description of sexual identity/identification as both product and proces.

To investigate communication as a network of elements from which meaning emerges, I use semiology. Semiology is the study of signs and sign systems; meaning emerges from the interrelationship of signs and readers. Different readers/readings produce different interpretations of a text. Raymond Williams (1977) identifies three basic ideological positions from which readings emerge: the reading of the dominant culture, a residual reading that resists that dominant interpretation and is concerned with equality, and an emergent reading that rejects the value system inherent in the dominant reading and argues for radical change. According to semiologists all readings have an ideological content; they tell us about the belief system of the culture in which the individual is reading. Within the relationship of reader and text meanings of sexual

identity/identification develop. The dominant reading carries the heterosexist bias of the culture. The heterosexist bias is the compulsory heterosexual ideology imposed by the dominant culture. (Rich, 1980; Coward, 1982; and Hart, 1989) A residual reading reveals the liberal feminist position which agrees with the terms used by the dominant culture but tries to reject the sexist practices of the culture in favor of equality. The emergent reading uses the terms of the dominant culture in order to reject those terms and meanings and argues against the construction of female-feminine/male-masculine as binary opposites. The emergent reading for this paper is best described by Julia Kristeva's (1986) identification of the third generation of feminism which rejects the binary opposition of gender categories and seeks to transcend the two categories.

By using the semiological approach, female and male, feminine and masculine are not nouns that can be affixed to individuals or behaviors. Sexual identity/identification is best constructed as a system or structure humans use to name and describe reality. (Kessler and McKenna, 1978 p. 99 ) Rubin (1975) uses the term "sex-gender system" to refer to "the representation of each individual in terms of a particular soical relation which pre-exists the individual and is predicated on the conceptual and rigid (structural) opposition of two biological sexes." (de Lauretis, 1987, p. 8) The sex-gender system is the place where feminist theory and semiology intersect. It is at this point that sexual identity/identification is understood as an issue of representation and not as the psychological byproduct of biological sex. Sexual identity/identification is constructed as the effect of communicating rather than the cause of communication behaviors. Sexual identity/identification is both something we are and something we are

becoming all of the time. It is both something that we bring to a context and something that occurs in communicating. Sexual identity/identification is accomplished in communication. By reversing the prevailing point of view it may be possible to identify what--if anything--is *left* after the culturally constructed aspects of gender have been identified, and to investigate how sexual identities/identifications emerge in communication as the effect of a network of elements.

The central question for this investigation is: how is it possible to identify the ways sexual identity comes into existence and comes to consciousness in communicating? The specific research question is: What understanding of the products and processes of sexual identity/identification is gained by reading a text from the three distinct but *interrelated* ideological positions? In this case the text will be newspaper sports pages with particular attention given to the photographs. Sports photographs are particularly useful in the analysis of sexual identity/identification because sport itself is social institution and as such disseminates *cultural* values, expectations, and rules. (Trujillo and Ekdom, 1985; Edwards, 1983) It becomes clear in the analysis of sports pages that sex role stereotypes like those identified in gender and communication studies research, are actively constructed in the network of signs called communication practices.

## Readings

When reading from the dominant position I focus on the function of the daily newspaper and newspaper photographs as spaces for signifying practices of the heterosexual ideology of sexual identity/identification. This reading appears as an apparently natural reading of the text. In a dominant reading of the sports page the value system of the reader is the

same as the value system represented by the codes of the naturalized text. (Barthes, 1977) This constitutes a "preferred reading" of the text. (Fiske, 1982) Thus a dominant reading of the newspaper sports pages is characterized by heterosexual assumptions, because the dominant culture is characterized by heterosexual assumptions. (Wittig, 1981) The reader and the text are not disrupted because both reader and text agree as to how the text "ought" to be read. (Williams, 1977) More than that, in the dominant reading the sign system is not recognized as arbitrary, but is thought to be natural to such an extent that the possibility of other readings is restricted. (Culler, 1986)

The second reading is residual. This is the reading characteristic of liberal feminism. The focus is on equal access to the system for two opposite sex categories. The reading begins with closed assumptions about the binary opposition of female/male and feminine/masculine. This is the reading of the positivist social science tradition. The residual reading is defined as a reading that accepts the dominant paradigm, in this case binary opposition of female-feminine from male-masculine and heterosexuality. The liberal feminist reading assumes an essentially gendered individual, that is that gender is a stable personality trait inherent in individuals. The difference between this reading and the dominant reading is that a residual reading "is prepared to argue that a particular group's place within that structure needs improving." (Fiske, 1982 p. 114) This reading accepts as natural the division into two sexes, but objects to the practices built on that division. In fact, Williams (1977) argues it is necessary for the dominant paradigm to incorporate aspects of the residual reading into itself in order to make sense. The value called equality is one that comes from a residual reading and one that is in a sense co-opted by the dominant value system. Although the dominant

value system claims to value equality, actual equality still does not exist for many individuals and groups. The challenge a residual reading represents (in this case the challenge of greater equality) to the dominant paradigm must be contained. This, it seems, is what Johnson and Leck (1975) had in mind when they warned of the danger of gender communication studies being co-opted by the status quo notions of the essential gendered individual and the binary, biologically bound categories of female/feminine and male/masculine.

Finally, the third reading is emergent. In this reading it is possible to focus on sexual identity/identification as a product and process. In this reading the commutation test, reveals the constructed subject position, the constructed network of signs, and the internal logic within the system known as a newspaper sports page. The emergent reading recognizes the preferred dominant reading but rejects it. (Fiske, 1982; Williams, 1977) An emergent reading rejects what it sees as the dominant power relations grounded in the identification and maintenance of binary oppositions and founded on the ideology of exclusion and the politics of power. In this case, in a study which focuses on sexual identity/identification, the preferred dominant reading is seen as the reading of heterosexuality. To the extent that it attempts to exclude other possibilities, the dominant reading is heterosexist. The emergent reading then reveals both the subject *position* possibilities and the internal logic of the sports page and speaks against the assumption of the existence of an essential gendered individual.

The possibilities of these three readings are well illustrated by applying them to messages about attitudes in American society. Throughout the United States the major and minor daily and weekly newspapers usually devote one or more pages, sometimes an entire

section, to coverage of athletics. In addition to written accounts of sports events, photographs of athletes are published. Newspapers in which sports photographs and written accounts are found, such as The Sacramento Bee and the San Francisco Chronicle, are divided into multiple sections. The importance given to sports in these papers is readily apparent. The regular daily sections include the front page section which covers local, national and international news, a business section, a features or lifestyle section, and a sports section. Additionally, The San Francisco Chronicle runs a daily international news section. In this way these papers, like many others, present athletics as parallel in importance to international, business, and local news.

Sport in general is a far reaching social institution. (Trujillo and Ekdom, 1985) As a social institution, sport serves to reinforce American values. According to Trujillo and Ekdom,

> Like other pervasive institutions--marriage and family, politics, education, religion, and economy--sport is integrally connected to the dominant social structure of American society and thus to the values, beliefs, and ideologies of that society (Duncan). (p. 263).

Values such as "achievement and success, activity and work, morality, humanitarianism, efficiency and practicality, progress, material comfort, equality, freedom, external conformity, science and secular rationality, nationalism, democracy, individual personality and group superiority" (Trujillo and Ekdom 1985 p. 262) are characteristic of Americans. Sport is not only integrally connected to the dominant values, beliefs, and ideologies of our society, but according to sociologist Harry Edwards (1973), as quoted by Trujillo and Ekdom, sport has the function of "disseminating and reinforcing the values regulating behavior and goal attainment. . .and regulating perceptions of life in general." (p. 263)

There are a number of arguments suggesting that newspapers and news photographs, in general, also serve the particular function of enforcing dominant readings of cultural events. (Barthes, 1977) The signifiers--articles, headlines, captions, and photographs--are all part of what Althusser (1971) called the ideological state apparatus of the family newspaper. As such, the *dominant* reading of the signifiers is consistent with the dominant ideology of the culture. First, and most obviously, a dominant reading interprets the sports page as just that: the sports page. It is a site where the coverage of sports events is offered. The information is presumed to be reasonably accurate and reliable. The newspaper recounts *the* details of sports events, comments on the events, and illustrates the reporting of competitions and activities surrounding competitions with photographs.

The newspaper photograph has a specific function both for the photojournalist and semiologist. In a discussion of the importance of photographs, publishing consultant Jan White (1986) says, "Pictures are goldmines of factual information. Furthermore, they elicit emotional responses--and that helps communicate ideas. Pictures entice and invite readers. That's an important function because, in my opinion, nobody really wants to read. It's too much work." (p. 145) A news story might be skimmed over or ignored altogether but the photographs cannot help but be seen, even by the most casual reader. In addition, news photographs possess a quality that Barthes (1977) calls "having-been-there." The photographs capture and document a moment. The photographs' reality is "that of *having-been-there*, for in every photograph there is the always stupefying evidence of *this is how it was*. (p. 44) This quality appears to remind the reader that what is photographed really happened, nothing is altered; this quality reinforces the sense that the image information is an

accurate representation of reality. For Barthes (1977) press photography discloses itself to be "like every well-structured signification, an institutional activity." (p. 31) For Barthes, (1977) the photographic connotation is " an institutional activity; in relation to society overall, its function is to integrate man, to reassure him." (p. 35) In the press photograph specifically Barthes says "we can hope to find the forms our society uses to ensure its peace of mind and to grasp thereby the magnitude, the detours and the underlying function of that activity." (p. 31)

Photography is significant to the study of identity because, "the more technology develops the diffusion of information (and notably of images), the more it provides the means of masking the constructed meaning under the appearance of the given meaning." (p. 46) Or the greater the diffusion of dominant code images, the more the arbitrariness of the signs is presented as natural. The sports photographs are mere moments, but they are moments that reveal both the structure we use to construct sexual identity and the structure we use to deny that sexual identity is constructed.

In addition, according to Barthes (1977) the linguistic message accompanying photographs serves the function of "anchoring" the interpretation of the image. For Barthes the principal function of the anchor is ideological. "The *text* directs the reader through the signifieds of the image, causing him to avoid some and receive others; it remote controls him towards a meaning chosen in advance." (p. 40) Thus, the linguistic message often attempts to insure a dominant reading of the text, to hold the meaning still. The linguistic signifiers (captions, titles, headlines) appear to identify the content of the picture but also have the effect of enforcing the dominant reading.

In order for the signification "factual reports of athletic activities" to emerge, a number of elements from the set of signifiers of athletics may be present: uniforms, equipment, teams/organization, statistics, affiliations (school, city, club, nation), competition, physical prowess/superiority, physical strength, mental concentration, commitment, luck/chance, uncertain outcome. By virtue of appearing on the sports page of the newspape,r that signification is achieved. There is an accompanying set of dominant associations to sports covered by the newspaper.

In particular, the newspapers most often cover mass-sport. Mumford (1984) identifies mass-sport as a cultural institution. He further defines it as "forms of organized play in which the spectator is more important than the player. Mass-sport is primarily a spectacle." (p. 517) An element of "mortal chance or hazard" is usually required. But mass-sport is so tightly organized (what Mumford calls a "mechanical regime") that actual risk and chance are drastically decreased. What "was originally a drama becomes an exhibition," (p. 520) again reinforcing the emphasis on the spectator.

The notion of mass-sport as mass-spectacle is reinforced in the United States where, in addition to receiving news status parallel to local, national, and international events, Mumford argues it is big business where "millions are invested in arenas, equipment, and players, and the maintenance of sport becomes as important as the maintenance of any other form of profit-making mechanism." (p. 521)

Mumford's argument is substantiated by the statistics reported by Brendan Boyd (1989). The professional sports with the biggest paid attendance are: horse racing--$70.1 million; major league baseball--53.2 million; professional football--15.2 million; professional

basketball--13.2 million. These are the money sports, the ones (with the exception of horse racing) with the greatest coverage on the first page of the sports section. These statistics refer only to attendance and do not include the millions of dollars in television revenue garnered by teams.

The ability of the sports page to transmit dominant culture values of heterosexuality appears on many levels. The context of the sports page is itself masculinized. It is a system designed by, for, and about men. The jobs held in and around newspapers and sports are dominated by males (Eberhard and Myers, 1988) Overall sports represents a network of professions populated predominantly by men: athletes, managers, coaches, physicians, trainers, owners, reporters, photographers, editors, agents, and lawyers.

It is possible, in a dominant reading, that we do not even of think sexual identity/identification. It is normal, natural, and "commonsensical" to find mostly pictures of men on the sports page. A reader might simply assume that there are far more male than female athletes, that athletics are more "natural" to males than females, and that activities covered on the front page of the sports section are simply the most "important." This perception reflects Williams' (1977) first use of ideology--a system of beliefs of a particular class or group.

The residual reading reflects Williams' second use of ideology: the system of beliefs of a group is seen to be illusory. The dominant reading suggests that there are simply more male than female athletes, but the residual reading would argue that the newspaper itself is culpable in this situation. In the past, researchers have studied the ratio of males to females in newspaper photographs. Specific to sports pages, Miller (1975) found that photographs of male athletes outnumbered photographs of female athletes by 22:1 in the Washington Post and 10:1 in the Los Angeles

Times. Blackwood (1983) found that the discrepancy was even greater eight years later.

In the two months' worth of sports sections collected from The San Francisco Chronicle and The Sacramento Bee, the following ratios were found. In all, 289 photographs of men were found in contrast with thirteen of women, for an overall ratio of 22:1. Specifically, the ratio of photographs of males to females for, The San Francisco Chronicle in December, 1988 was 17:1; The Sacramento Bee in December, 1988 was 38:1; The San Francisco Chronicle in June, 1989 was 18:1; The Sacramento Bee in June, 1989 was 19:1. Overall, the ratio for The San Francisco Chronicle was 18:1 and for The Sacramento Bee was 27:1. The residual reading would argue that there should be greater parity of coverage and attention. But because this reading accepts the terms of the dominant reading it reinforces the exclusive association of athletics with the category male/masculine.

The emergent reading includes Williams' third use of ideology in which the general process of the production of meanings and ideas, a system of false beliefs, and the beliefs of a particular group merge. The emergent reader of the newspaper sports page refuses as false the belief that sport is more "natural" to males than females. This reader also refuses the belief that most of what is shown in sports photography is "masculinity." Finally the emergent reader refuses the false belief that female-feminine/male masculine are naturally oppositional and exclusive categories.

At this point, Barthes' (1977) notion of myth becomes pertinent. The myth for Barthes is the chain of related concepts associated with signifieds, in this case the idea of sports. Our cultural knowledge of sports is associated with our cultural stereotypes of masculinity.

Mumford (1984) writes that male athletes in particular represent, "virility, courage, and gameness." (p. 520) And to a great extent the newspaper sports photographs of athletes reinforce this cultural ideology.

A primary claim of many gender and communication studies is that the category female/feminine is characterized by the following behaviors called expressive: eager to soothe hurt feelings, gentle, tender, understanding, warm, compassionate, sincere, helpful, friendly, and sensitive to the needs of others. (Wheeless and Dierks-Stewart 1981, p. 184) The category male/masculine is characterized by the following behaviors called instrumental: acts as a leader, has leadership abilities, dominant, aggressive, willing to take a stand, forceful, assertive, strong personality, competitive, and independent. (Wheeless and Dierks-Stewart 1981 p.184) Although, one might contest whether these categories are the best way to describe sexual identity/identification, they do help identify prevalent stereotypes of appropriate and desireable behavior. It is possible to identify associations between these stereotypes and sports. This list of attributes, assigned to the masculinity category, with the possible exception of "strong personality" and "independent," are traits often associated with athletics and athletes. Of the 302 photographs read the largest group is of men actively engaged in a competition which requires them to be dominant, aggressive, forceful, willing to take a stand, assertive, and competitive .

Readings of specific photographs and linguistic signifiers from the newspaper sports page provide greater clarification of the relationship between cultural stereotypes of appropriate and desireable sex role behavior, cultural stereotypes of athletics, and newspaper coverage of athletics. In June, 1989 The San Francisco Chronicle covered Wimbledon. On June 29 (figure 1) and June 30 (figure 2) the paper ran

# Inspired Goldie Ousts Connors

**BRUCE JENKINS**

Wimbledon, England

**THE INFLUENCE** of Stanford tennis is everywhere in Wimbledon. There are more Stanford men in this year's draw than there are from the entire countries of France and Italy combined. On a cold, horrid, English afternoon yesterday, one of them sent Jimmy Connors home in ruins.

Dan Goldie, who had never raised the slightest whisper in this tournament, played four sets of inspired tennis to eliminate Connors, 7-6, 5-7, 6-4, 6-2, in the second round. Connors has made earlier exits — Robert Seguso beat him in the first round three years ago — but few more discouraging.

"The operation was successful, but the patient died," he said. "I had every chance in the world out there. I just didn't work it through."

Connors didn't seem ready to give Goldie, 1986 NCAA singles champion, any credit. "He was OK," said Connors. "He served OK, nothing fantastic."

Goldie didn't seem all that excited, either, at least on the outside.

BY UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

**Dan Goldie drove a two-handed backhand to Jimmy Connors yesterday**

He's never been too keen on press interviews, and he spoke in calm, even tones throughout. But this ranked with the best victories of his career, and it had to be especially satisfying since Goldie was a first-round loser in his three previous Wimbledons.

"Connors may be 37 (actually 36,

*See Page D7, Col. 1*

Figure 1

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

South African Ros Fairbank reached for a shot yesterday during her Wimbledon upset of third-seeded Gabriela Sabatini

# Wimbledon Shocker: Sabatini Eliminated

*By Bruce Jenkins*
*Chronicle Staff Writer*

Wimbledon, England

**Gabriela Sabatini not only lost a tennis match yesterday, she seemed to pass right out of a generation. On such days, Wimbledon translates into life on high-speed search.**

Just two months ago, Sabatini, 19, was the glamorous pillar of tennis youth, the No. 1 heir to the Graf-Navratilova-Evert throne. Last night, she seemed strangely old and forgotten. It took just that long for the new generation to arrive.

Sabatini, seeded third, lost her second-round match to Ros Fairbank, 6-4, 6-3, to fall out of the tournament that now embraces 17-year-old Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and 15-year-old Monica Seles. She hardly seemed like the same Sabatini who played in the U.S. Open final last year. She looked confused and disoriented, and in a world as twisted as women's tennis, how could you blame her?

Sabatini was the day's major story, with fifth-seeded Zina Garrison also being eliminated, 1-6, 6-2, 7-5, by little-known Louise Field of Australia. Zina didn't feel that great, either, saying: "You figure to

*See Page D8, Col. 1*

figure 2

stories about Wimbledon. Both stories appeared on the lower half of the page, both stories were boxed in by a thin black line setting them off from the rest of the page, both stories featured pictures of winning players, the pictures were approximately the same size, the name of the player was used in the caption, and both photographs featured players during the game.

A dominant reading might suggest that the coverage of Wimbledon presented by The San Francisco Chronicle is normal, natural, and appropriate for the importance of the event. A residual reading might actually praise the coverage as remarkably balanced between coverage of the men's and women's play. Both stories appear in approximately the same position on the page--because stories that appear above the fold are more likely to be seen, the lower half of the page is not as prominent a position, but in this case it was equal. And the size of the boxes in which the stories appear and the accompanying photographs are approximately they same size. The emergent reading might argue that there are significant differences between the two stories. In the June 29 story, the name of the winning, pictured player appeared in the headline and was used in the story as the lead in the second paragraph. In the June 30 story the name of the winning player did not appear in the headline and was not used in the accompanying story until the second line of the third paragraph. The following caption accompanies the June 29 photograph: "Dan Goldie drove a two-handed backhand to Jimmy Connors yesterday." The following caption accompanies the June 30 photograph: "South African Ros Fairbank reached for a shot yesterday during her Wimbledon upset of third-seeded Gabriela Sabatini." In the June 29 photograph the player's face is distorted, his eyes are narrowed and his lips are pressed together. In the June 30 photograph no such distortion is visible. The June 29 photograph is easily associated with terms such as aggression, force, dominance,

assertion, and competition. Even without a tennis racquet, the look of fierce determination on the player's face could conjure up these associations. For the June 30 photograph however, without the tennis racquet the player looks like someone "running like a girl." Most importantly, the woman's victory was of greater "new value". Fairbanks was an unseeded player who upset the third seeded player, while both Goldie and Connor were unseeded.

A third set of tennis pictures (figures 3 and 4) further develop the emergent reading. On June 11, 1989 both The San Francisco Chronicle and The Sacramento Bee published the same photograph from the French Open. The Sacramento Bee photograph was quite large and in color. Two thirds of the picture appeared above the fold, the other third, along with a story, appeared below the fold. Both photograph and story appeared in a box. The San Francisco Chronicle coverage of the same event appeared at the bottom of the page with a smaller, black and white photograph, and a shorter story. The photograph shows the winner of the French Open raising a clenched fist in the air after the victory. The player's face is distorted into a yell, mouth wide open, eyes narrowed. The caption for the photograph in the The Sacramento Bee states: "Arantxa Sanchez of Spain doesn't hide her feelings after beating Steffi Graff to win the French Open." The San Francisco Chronicle captioned the same photograph of Sanchez this way: "Arantxa Sanchez lets out a yell after grabbing her first Grand Slam title." No tennis racquet is seen; however, like the photograph of Goldie, this image is easily associated with aggression, force, and dominance. Differences between this coverage and that of the Goldie photograph are found in the text in The Sacramento Bee which describes Sanchez this way: "tears of a stunned Sanchez--wailing at the enormity of what she had done."(p. C1) While there is some degree of parity in the

# Clenching victory

Arantxa Sanchez of Spain doesn't hide her feelings after beating Steffi Graf to win the French Open.

Associated Press

## Sanchez's vigor, volley outlast ailing Graf in French

**By Sally Jenkins**
**Washington Post**

PARIS — Arantxa Sanchez of Spain, a bright spark of a girl with a motto of "Why not?" Saturday defeated Steffi Graf to win the French Open.

In a final that will be remembered for the damp, worried forehead of Graf rather than the tears of a stunned Sanchez — wailing at the enormity of what she had done — the 17-year-old upset the world's No. 1 player and ended the West German's bid for another Grand Slam, 7-6 (8-6), 3-6, 7-5 at Stade Roland Garros.

Graf, the 19-year-old 1988 Grand Slam winner, led 5-3 in the final set and served for the match in the tournament's longest women's final. But she was sickish throughout their 2-hour, 55-minute encounter and could not dismiss the startling challenge of Sanchez, who is ranked No. 10 in the world. Graf won just three points in the last four games, as Sanchez broke serve twice at love to achieve what surely is the largest upset in tournament history.

"I play a great match, and I beat the No. 1 player in the world," Sanchez said. "I'm so excited, I don't have the words for talking."

So there will be no unprecedented Double Slam for Graf, who was attempting to sweep the Australian and French opens, Wimbledon and the U.S. Open for the second consecutive calendar year. There will be no unprecedented third straight French championship and no sixth consecutive Grand Slam victory, which would have tied the 1983-84 accomplishment of Martina Navratilova. "Winning another Grand Slam was

See FRENCH, page C3

figure 3

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Arantxa Sanchez** *lets out a yell after grabbing her first Grand Slam title.*

# Sanchez upsets Graf to win French Open

**By Stephen R. Wilson**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

PARIS — For once, history was not on Steffi Graf's side.

Graf's hopes of becoming the only woman to win the Grand Slam twice were erased in the French Open final Saturday by Arantxa Sanchez.

Instead, it was the 17-year-old Spaniard who made history by becoming the youngest woman to win the French title. She also became the first Spanish woman ever to win a Grand Slam tournament.

Hustling all over the court and forcing an ailing Graf into 68 backcourt errors, the seventh-seeded Sanchez won, 7-6 (8-6), 3-6, 7-5, in 2 hours and 58 minutes.

"This is a wonderful day for me," said Sanchez, who had not won a set off Graf in their three

[ *See SANCHEZ, C-13* ]

**Chang seeks first French title by an American man since 1955.** [ *C-13* ]

figure 4

behaviors displayed by Goldie and Sanchez, much of the parity between the coverage of Goldie by The San Francisco Chronicle and the coverage of Sanchez by The Sacramento Bee is mitigated by the two references to emotion, first in the caption and second in the story. Little parity exists in the first place between the Goldie and Sanchez stories as covered by The San Francisco Chronicle. The most significant difference in the construction of the two stories is the fact that Sanchez, the youngest woman to win the French Open, the first Spanish woman to win a Grand Slam event, a number 10 ranked player going into the tournament, who beat the number one player in the world received less than half as much space as unseeded Goldie's second round win over unseeded Connors.

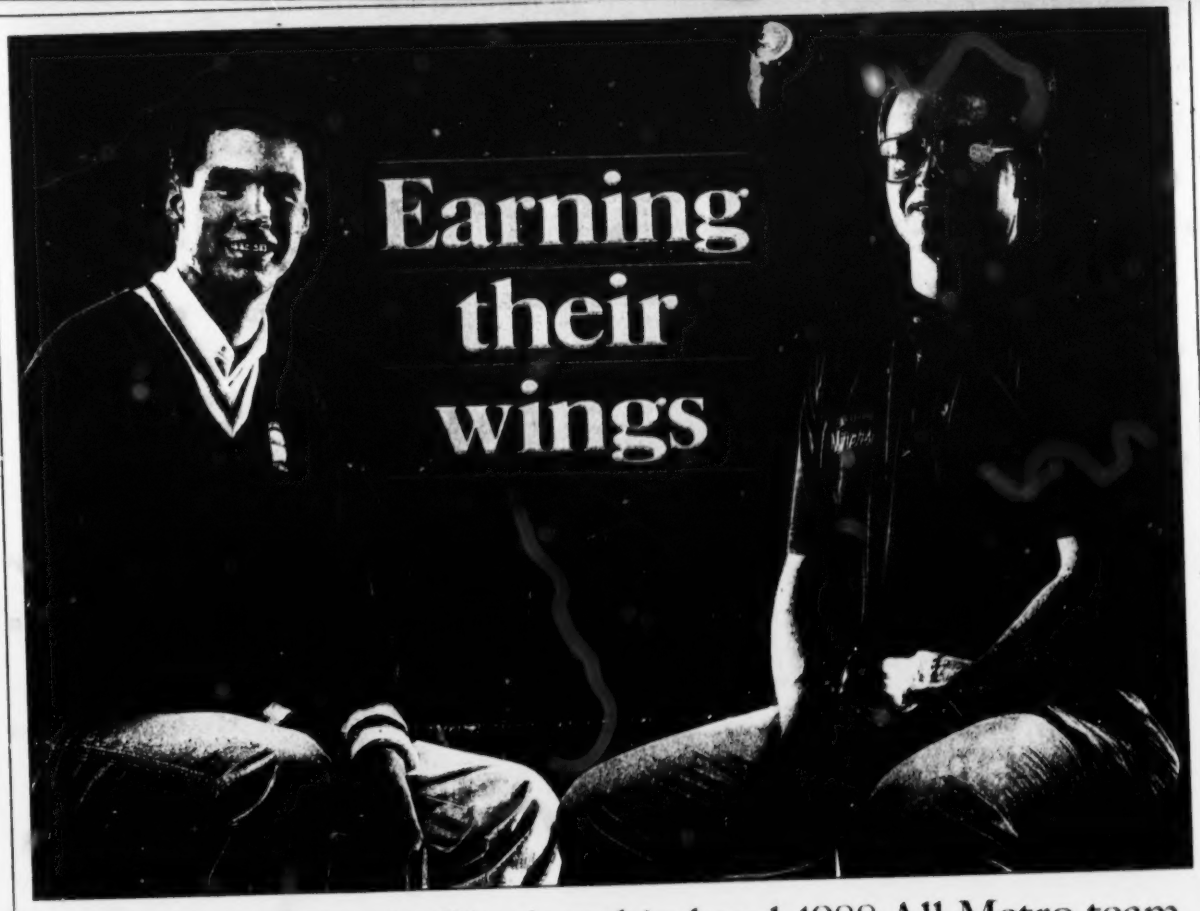
It would seem, based on the above photographs, that a woman might be an athlete, indeed that is quite acceptable; however if a woman is an athlete she is drawing on characteristics from the category male/masculine. Just as Lott (1981) said, by this standard she gets points for masculinity. But in this case those points are balanced out by the points she also gets for femininity when the text tell us she cannot hide her feelings, that she shed tears and wailed.

Other photographs of female athletes often reflect an effort to mitigate a context and text which culturally announce and assign the category male/masculine. In order to be athletes, females must run, jump, use force and aggression, and assert themselves physically and psychologically. In fact, Mumford (1984) argues that the female athlete's qualities "must be Amazonian in character." (p. 520) Despite the necessary action/instrumental nature of athletics, few photographs of women actively engaged in sports are shown. Females are most often featured in ways that are consistent with gender communication findings regarding appropriate female/feminine behavior. In these cases, the context and text

are necessary in order to direct the reading toward the conclusion that the figure in the picture is actually a competitive athlete. The newspapers examined displayed such a small number of photographs of women that it is possible to easily describe all of them. Other than the photograph of Ros Fairbanks there is only one other picture of a woman actively engaged in her sport. This is one of a runner. Two photographs of females were posed by the photographer. One shows a teenage golfer lying on the ground lounging against her golf bag with the title "Little lady, big talent" under the photograph; one is of runner Mary Decker Slaney sitting on Santa Claus' lap, while a male sprinter stands next to Santa. The only other photographs of female athletes are the two of Arantxa Sanchez. There are two photographs of male athlete's female relatives: one is of a baseball player's grandmother; one is of a baseball player's wife, holding their daughter. There is a photograph of an eleven year old female cleaning a miniature horse owned by her family. There are three are one inch/mug shot photographs: two are of sportswriter Joan Ryan, one is of a broadcast sports reporter. One photograph is of the Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders.

Female athletes, when they are shown at all, are shown as maintaining a "feminine" attitude. The internal logic is: you may be aggressive, assertive, acting as a leader, dominant, etc. but in the rare cases where we represent you that way we will be sure to include signifiers of female/femininity. For the most part, the front page of the newspaper sports page shows women as playing an auxiliary role in sports--wife, child, mother, reporter, and cheerleader.

A third set of photographs that illustrates differences and similarities appeared in The Sacramento Bee on December 1, 1988 (figure 5) and June 1, 1989 (figure 6). The December page features a large color




# Chris Vargas, Randy Blankenship head 1988 All-Metro team

**By Don Bosley**
**Bee Staff Writer**

The respective wings of Chris Vargas and Randy Blankenship bear little resemblance, but in the 1988 prep football season those wings carried both to lofty achievements.

Vargas, the Woodland High quarterback who winged his way to the top of Superior California passing statistics, is The Bee's Player of the Year for 1988. Blankenship, the Nevada Union coach whose deceptive wing-T offense befuddled one opponent after another, is the 1988 Coach of the Year.

Vargas was a close winner, Blankenship a clear one in recent balloting conducted among area coaches and Bee sportswriters.

A slightly built senior at 6-foot and 160 pounds, Vargas used intelligence, poise and his accurate right arm to lead all Superior California passers. He edged Rio Americano fullback Allen Woods, San Juan fullback Andy DaCosta and Yuba City's all-purpose Brian Brown in Player of the Year voting.

In 11 games this season, Vargas threw for 2,303 yards and 31 touchdowns — the latter figure a SupCal best by six. He completed 153 passes in 286 attempts, a percentage of 53.5.

Vargas' numbers over his two-year varsity career show 4,083 yards passing and 42 TDs, with 266 completions in 511 attempts (52.1 percent). During that stretch he led Woodland to 6-4 and 7-3 seasons, and this year he helped the Wolves claim their first playoff berth since 1980.

His best game was the last of his high school career, a 29-26 loss to Cordova in the opening round of the playoffs Nov. 19. Vargas completed 21 of 46 passes for 373 yards and four TDs in that game.

"His physical stature is not tremendous, as far as what colleges are looking for," Woodland coach Dan Boyett said. "But he has quick feet, he has a nice delivery on the ball, and a quick release.

"Take all those physical characteristics and his ability to make a pre-snap read, audible at the line and (make) a post-snap read, and he's the complete quarterback except for height."

Two of Vargas' favorite targets, wide receiver Jeff Harlow and tight end Tom Lewis, were first-team selections on The Bee's All-Metro team. San Juan had three players selected to the first team, while Woodland, Davis, Nevada Union, Bella Vista, Cordova and Mel Hatch's had two.

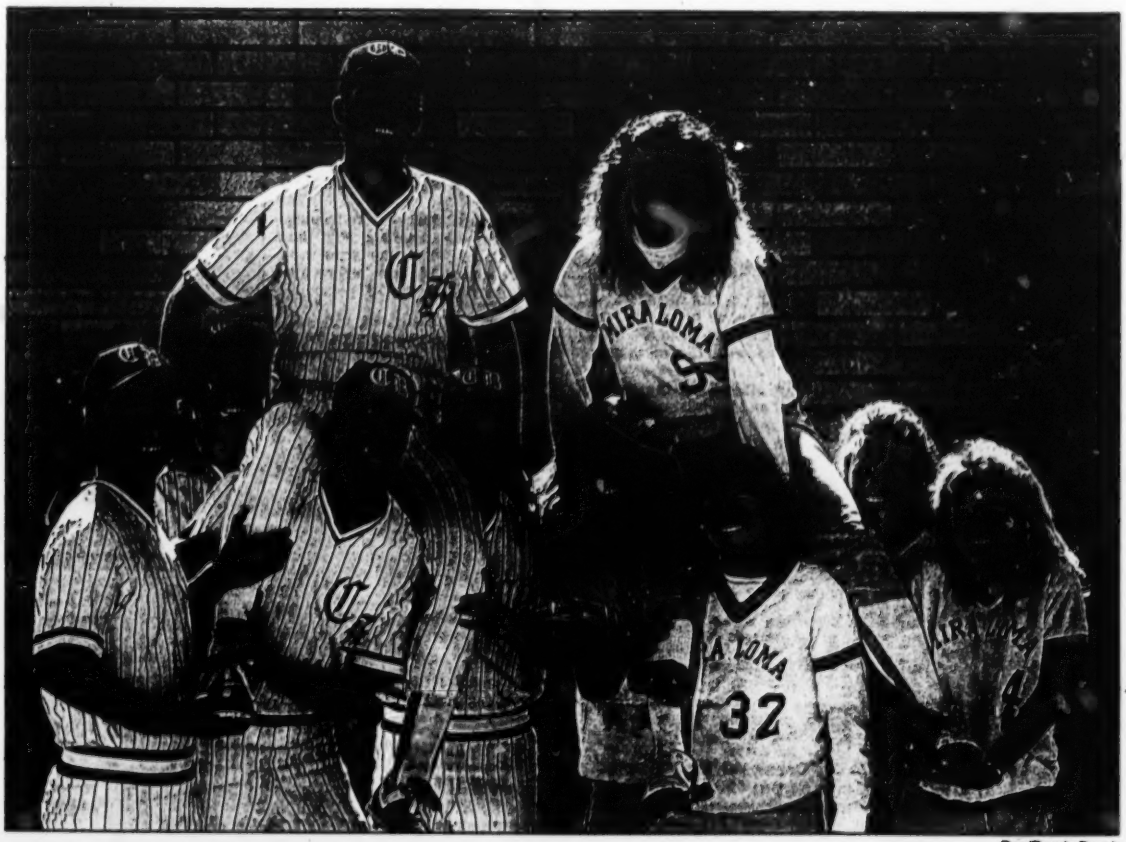
Blankenship's team, upset in the section quarterfinals by Cordova last Saturday, nevertheless enjoyed a season of tremendous success. Between a season-opening tie with Davis and the loss to Cordova, the Miners won nine in a row to claim the Capital Athletic League championship and The Bee's No. 1 ranking at the end of the regular season.

Nevada Union lacked the size of many opponents — top lineman Stephen Davidson weighs only 165 pounds — but Blankenship's wing-T helped overcome that. A maze of pulling guards, trap blocks and backfield fakes, the Miners' wing-T averaged 383.1 yards a game during the regular season.

Though the wing accounted for 2,609 rushing yards in nine regular-season game, its

See ALL-METRO, page 1-7

## All-Metro team




Bee/Randy Pench

**The high school players of the year are airborne, courtesy of some teammates. They are Bo Dodson of Christian Brothers, left, and Amy Windmiller of Mira Loma. Complete listing and stories, page C6.**

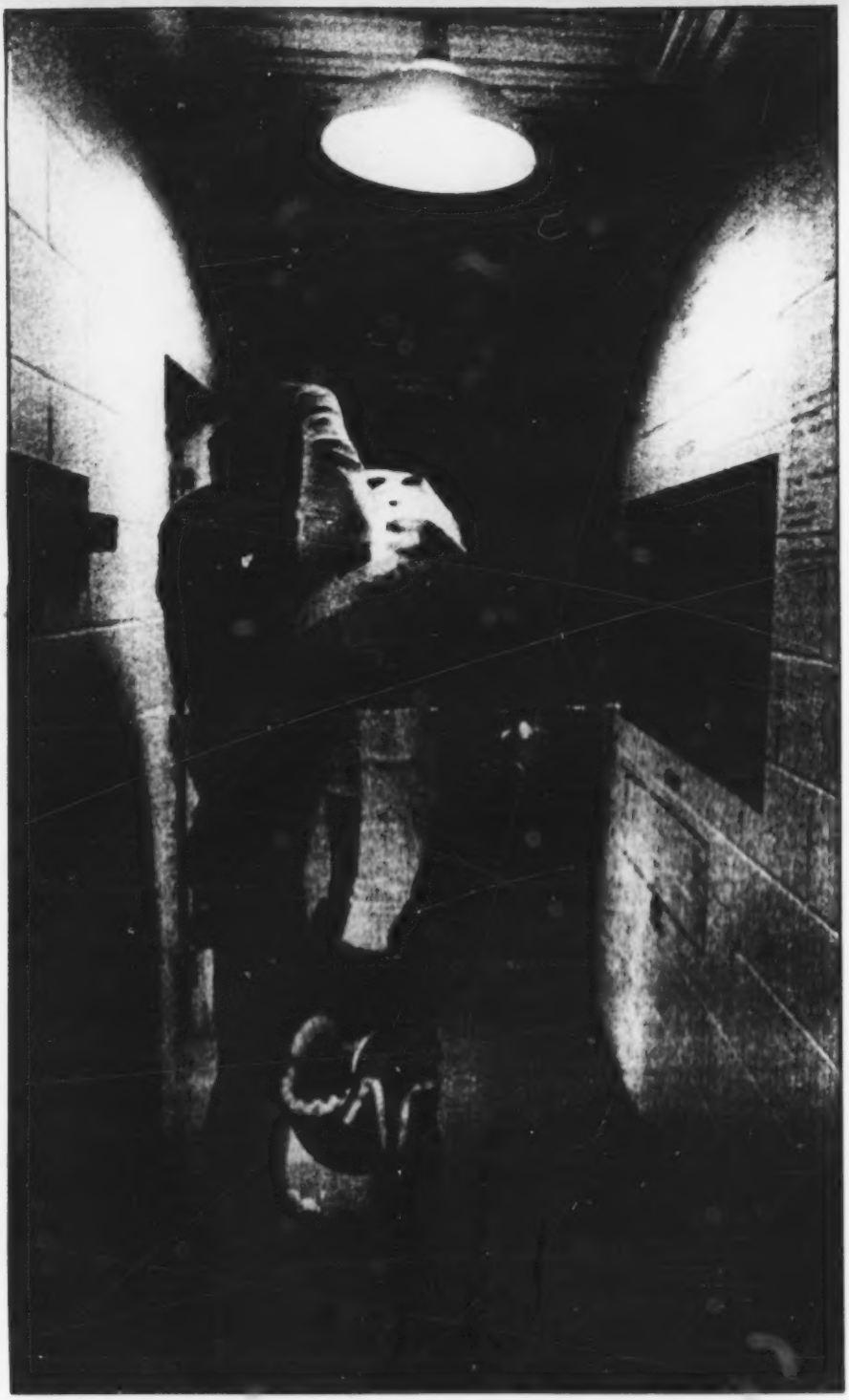
photograph of a player and a coach. The two participants are not in uniform; this is a posed photograph. The figure on the left has been selected "All-Metro" player of the year, the figure on the right has been selected "All-Metro" coach of the year. In the middle of the photograph itself there is a headline reading: "Earning their wings." The photograph is accompanied by a long story and both photograph and story are set off in a box. On June 1 a parallel story, but not parallel coverage is featured. On that day a large (but about 1/3 smaller than the December 1 photograph) color photograph ran on the front page of the sports page. The photograph, headlined, "All-Metro Team" shows two high school students sitting on the shoulders of teammates. On the left side a young baseball player sits securely on the shoulders of one teammate, resting his hands for support on the shoulders of two others. On the right, a young softball player sits awkwardly on the shoulders of two teammates and rests her hands on their shoulders. She is leaning far to the left and is several inches lower than the baseball player. The two players carried by their teammates are the players of the year and are the only two names given in the caption. In fact, despite the title of the picture the other players are not necessarily "All-Metro" players, they simply are from the same high school as the players of the year. The full story of this event appears on the sixth page of the sports section. The primary difference between these two stories indicates the valued status of football for The Sacramento Bee.

A dominant reading might indicate that this is the natural representation of high school athletes. A residual reading might argue that the coverage of the "All-Metro" players is another unusual example of parity in coverage of male and female teams. And that it is evidence of the gains that have been made in increasing access to athletics for women. An emergent reading might argue that even though the June story involves two sports

and therefore twice as many participants, it is given less coverage. This seems to place football in a superior position. It is interesting that the primary sport does not have a counterpart played by high school age females. It is man's alone. And for those sports in which there are parallel female and male teams, the men's teams suffer less prominent coverage than the "male only" sports.

Finally, a photograph that appeared on December 4, 1988 in The Sacramento Bee (figure 7) further illustrates the differences in the process of sexual identity/identification for male athletes. It is a large photograph. Half of it is above the fold, half below. In the photograph, two athletes are standing in a dimly lit hallway after a game. They are embracing each other. One player's head rests on the other's shoulder. The caption tells us they are consoling each other after a loss. The accompanying story does not refer directly to the photograph.

The dominant reading would find this to be a typical display of the intense emotions associated with athletics. A residual reading might note that this photograph captures two unique events: males expressing emotions and engaging in physical touch. A cultural stereotype identified by gender and communication studies is that touch between two men is the least likely kind of touching behavior. Jones (1986) reports, "overall, the results are consistent with the generalization that 'touching is a primarily feminine-appropriate behavior.' In some respects, the results also suggest that touching is a "masculine-inappropriate behavior.'" (p. 238) And these two athletes appear to be expressing emotions associated with femininity: sensitive to the needs of others, eager to soothe hurt feelings, gentle, tender, understanding, warm, compassionate, sincere, and helpful. It would be difficult to restrict the associations conjured up by this picture to aggression, dominance, force, or assertion.



Bee/Randy Pench

**Sacramento State quarterback Tony Trosin, right, and wide receiver Mark Young console each other after the Hornets' season came to an end with a 42-20 loss to North Dakota State.**

figure 5

For an emergent reading it could be argued that the possibility of what can be shown in a photograph of a male athlete reflects that athletics itself sufficiently signifies the category of associations known as male/masculine to allow for displays of behaviors that usually assign and announce the category of associations known as female/feminine. These men do not risk censure or silencing, because the context and extreme violence of their activities provides them the space to 'play' with the dominant culture's notions of appropriate and desirable behavior. So, in other words, if they weren't wearing uniforms, if they weren't being observed by thousands, they would not, and their behavior would not be tolerated. If they embraced, comforted, held, grabbed, touched, and felt the pleasure of one another's bodies except in full view of an audience, or at least a photographer, wearing uniforms, and in contrast to frequent, violent activity, they could be nonexistent by the rules and enforcement of the power of the sex-gender system. They could be identified as homosexual, and behavior regarded as homosexual is not considered appropriate or desirable within the heterosexist norms of the dominant culture. But because of this particular contact sport context, and despite their behavior, this is not the case.

In contrast to the small number and rigid categories of behavior available to women on the sports page, photographs of male athletes are numerous and fall into several groups. These categories are in no way mutually exclusive and are only offered to provide more information about what is included in the newspaper photographs of sports. The categories are created in an attempt to identify the content of the photographs. The first issue that seemed obvious in the pictures was whether or not they were photographs of actual games. There were 95 pictures of games in progress. In these photographs participants are actively engaged in the

sport. Some of the photographs show players making physical contact with each other, either purposely--grabbing another player to impede the player's progress, or inadvertently--falling onto another player. These two descriptions, purposely and inadvertently, are not mutually exclusive in that players as a part of strategic maneuvers brush against or in some way make physical contact with opponents, but try to make it seem unintentional. This is particularly true in basketball which is called a non-contact sport, but where "light" contact, such as bumping, seems to be essential.

In addition, there are game pictures where the ball was out of play. These photographs show participants during a game doing something other than actually competing. In these photographs participants may be walking off the field, sitting on the bench, sitting in the dugout, etc. There were 69 photographs of this type. Some of these photographs are particularly poignant because they document intense emotional reactions of sports participants.

The largest number of photographs were one inch and mug shot photographs that offered minimal information because they were very small and only showed the head of the individual. Each newspaper, on more than one occasion, included the photograph of the reporter next to her/his article. In each case the photograph appeared to be a portrait, rather than a live-action shot. In addition, both newspapers used small (approximately one inch) photographs of sports participants. Some of these pictures appear to be posed, others appear to be cropped action shots. Of the 87 photographs in this category, 49 are of columnists.

Finally, there are photographs of sports participants outside of a competition at times other than during a game. For example there is a candid picture of Olympic sprinter Ben Johnson testifying at a hearing on

his use of steroids. Another photograph shows professional tennis player Boris Becker being denied entrance to the All England Club on the first day of Wimbledon. There are 25 photographs of this type.

For an emergent reader newspaper coverage of athletics is a site where men are allowed to be represented displaying behaviors such as the expression of emotions and physical touch, even though these behaviors are regularly assigned by dominant readings to the category female/feminine. As a representation of transgressions of the code of masculinity, press photographs of athletes demonstrate the historically situated, interpretative nature of sex-roles. They are conditional--some people can break them, some of the time, under some circumstances. Seven days a week, in almost every newspaper in the country, there are photographs showing men expressing emotions and in direct physical contact with other men. Clothed in "protective", body-distorting uniforms, and all the metaphors of battle, these men are free to be seen expressing despair, hope, sorrow, joy, and grief. In addition, they are free to experience the pleasure of contact with other male bodies. They have intimate contact with one another from locker room nudity to on-the-field fondling, embracing and rolling around. Their behavior is above suspicion: no one questions the "masculinity" of "the warrior." For men then, it may be necessary to display extreme levels of violence and aggression in order to gain the freedom to display high degrees of emotional expressiveness and physical contact. It is also possible that it is necessary to display the so-called "feminine" traits in full public view, in a sense they must be available to be photographed. The code of sexual identity as displayed in press photographs of athletes informs us that men may be represented displaying behaviors from the category female/feminine as long as they are engaged in a violent competition, wearing a uniform, using a ball, and doing it in front of 50,000 paying customers.

## Conclusion

The stereotypes of appropriate and desirable behavior based on the sex of the individual are violated continuously in sports photographs of male athletes. The binary opposition of behaviors based on sex, breaks down in lived experience. Actions in and of themselves, or in nature are not inherently instrumental or expressive. Our stereotypes about sex difference have controlled the naming process. Because an action is performed by a male, the action is likely to be labeled instrumental. Thus our language choices are constrained by our sex difference biases. The point is that the words instrumental and expressive are themselves not sex neutral. Regarding sexual identity/identification, the analysis of the photographs suggestd that, within the sign system of the newspaper sports page, male athletes can be represented displaying many behaviors that are constructed as female/feminine as well as male/masculine. The internal logic of the sports page appears to be: it is safe to use photographs of men in "feminine" positions, because the network is so rigidly defined as "masculine." Thus there is very little danger of the athletes being "mistaken" for anything other than heterosexual, masculine males. The logic is reinforced on the sports page by the juxtaposition of instrumental/action pictures and the linguistic signifiers (headline, caption, and stories) that hold the dominant/heterosexist reading in place.

In contrast, the women who are seen on sports pages do not need to have action shots of them juxtaposed with shots of them in more traditional roles in order to assure a dominant/heterosexist reading, because almost no action shots of women are used. When such shots do appear, linguistic signifiers hold the dominant reading in place. Despite the influx of women into professional, college, and high school athletics, coverage is still minimal and most photographs of women on the sports

pages are not of female athletes but relatives of male athletes. Given the rigid structure of the sports photography network, it seems likely that representing females as "masculine" (aggressive, competitive, assertive, etc.) threatens the implicit claim that those characteristics are identified as the sole property of the category male/masculine. The exclusive association of those behaviors with the category male-masculine is precisely what allows the representations of male athletes to violate sex role stereotypes in the other photographs. Men cannot act like women and still be called men in a system where women can act like men too. If women can act that way then those characteristics are no longer what makes a man a man. Without the strict delineation of female-feminine from male-masculine it would be possible to read the photographs of male athletes and conclude that there are no "purely" male-masculine gestures, that these males are just as feminine as they are masculine, that these men are not, in fact, hyper masculine-males. A reading that rejects the dominant/heterosexist position rips apart the safety net provided by strict sex-role stereotyping.

Rakow (1986b) argues that in all circumstances the culture demands continuous announcement and assignment of sexual identity. In the case of the sports photographs, it would seem that the possibilities of what can be announced and assigned are pushed toward a dominant reading and a dominant selection that demands an interpretation based on heterosexuality. The dominant reading not only closes the differential field of meaning arbitrarily, but presents itself as naturalized to such an extent that other interpretations are nearly impossible and barely permitted.

Regarding the issue of an essential gendered individual, it appears that the announcement and assignment of sexual identity occurs within the

network of signs called the newspaper sports page. To the extent that sexual identity is socially constructed it cannot be operationalized satisfactorily as a by-product of individual biology or psychology. Semiological analysis can describe the social codes through which individual identities are constructed. And so semiological analysis can reveal how the representations of individual actions reflect our cultural ideology regarding sexual identity/identification. It is then possible to question the appropriateness and desirability of rigid gender classification systems. Reading the subjects in the sports photographs using male, female, masculine, feminine, or some combination of these labels reveals the relationship between the reader and the newspaper and the layers of cultural knowledge that guided both the reader's reading and the newspaper's representations. However, the use of those labels does not and cannot reveal an essential sexual identity for the bodies in the photographs.